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262 to the different sexes, the matter becomes important from a nutritional point of view.

It may be said at once that the food taboo proper is not widely observed among these Central African people. The Bemba tribe is divided into clans named after various animals or plants, but in no case are totemic food taboos kept. In fact, in some cases the [614] clan name is that of one of the staple foods of the tribe (Besa—an archaic name for millet; Boa, or 'mushroom'). Nor does there seem to be any food tabooed to one sex or the other, or considered appropriate to any particular time of life. Certain individuals regularly abstain from one or more types of relish. [755] Such restrictions may be the result of an order given by a native doctor who may make a cure conditional on the regular observance ● [777] of a food taboo, or it may follow the individual's own conviction that a particular food eaten on some memorable occasion has brought him ill luck and is therefore likely to do so again. In some cases one whole family (*ulupwa*) may avoid one type of relish, but it is impossible to decide in these instances whether the individuals have a natural antipathy to one food or the other, or whether the taboo is based entirely on magic grounds.

262 825 [777] [826 847] Another set of taboos are observed by chiefs, in this case entirely on animal food, and dependent on the belief in the magic properties of the animal. Animals with prominent lower teeth are unlucky. They are known as *ifinkuli* (sing. *icinkuli*)—the name given to children whose lower teeth have come through before their upper, and who used to be destroyed on this account. Such animals include the bush-pig, the wart-hog, the zebra, and the eland. The bush-buck is also taboo to a chief because it has a mottled skin and makes a choking noise, and is therefore believed to bring danger or leprosy and bronchial troubles. The flesh of the bush-pig is also considered unsuitable since it darts from side to side, and this it is said might disturb the judgements of the chief. For similar magic reasons, pregnant women must avoid the flesh of the bush-buck, 'Because it is mottled. Does she want her child to be striped?'[1] 262 843 But it must be stated at once that the pregnancy taboos are not nearly so numerous as among other African and Melanesian peoples, and both the taboos observed by the chiefs and by pregnant women are restrictions not on one type of food—vegetable or animal—but on one particular species of vegetable

[1] She must also avoid the *ifinkuli* and the wild cat.

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his supplies indefinitely. To-day the big chiefs make proper gardens every two years (*ukutema pakalamba*), and fill enormous granaries which they reckon to last for two seasons or more. They definitely do not try to produce the maximum amount of food possible each year as the following table shows. It appears that

*Annual Cultivation by Four Chiefs*

1 = Full cultivation. ½ = Small gardens.
0 = No cultivation. .. = No records obtained.

| | 1926 | 1927 | 1928 | 1929 | 1930 | 1931 | 1932 | 1933 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Citimukulu | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 1 | ½ | 1 |
| Nkula | 1 | 0 | 1 | ½ | ½ | 1 | 0 | ½ |
| Mwamba | .. | 1 | 0 | Village moved | 0 | 1 | ½ | ½ |
| Nkolemfumu | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 1 | 0 | 0 |

this was always the custom even when labour was easier to get. Thus the *mfumu* had about four times as much food accumulated as a commoner, but there was not a much greater difference than this between them. In any case the difference in wealth was a difference in power to distribute, not in the amount possessed.

The position of the commoner is different. Not only has he no reason to accumulate beyond a certain point, sufficient to give him enough to eat and to distribute in a small way, but he is also afraid to do so. To be much better off than his fellows would be dangerous. A man who is full when others are hungry is hardly considered to have achieved the good fortune by natural means. An occasional stroke of good luck is not resented, but to be permanently much more prosperous than the rest of the village would almost certainly lead to accusations of sorcery.[1] It might also be thought presumptuous (*icilumba*), an aping of the chief, and it would certainly cause a number of elderly female relatives to come and claim support from the lucky man. For these reasons the Bemba not only aims at a very modest competence, but he usually denies that he is as well off as he is. Unlike the Trobriand Islanders who boast about the fullness of their yam stores, the Bemba invariably denies that he has any food at all: 'We've simply swept the granary clean' (*twapyangafye*!) is his usual comment.[2]

[1] One of the reasons witchcraft is so much more common in urban areas where inequality in wealth is so much more striking.

[2] Compare the structure of the Trobriand granary designed to reveal the

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number of slaps, to be given by the winner and accepted by the loser!

This question of the general economic and aesthetic interests of the native in his environment needs to be discussed at the outset. It lies at the root of the fundamental difference in outlook between the European and the Bantu with regard to land. The Bemba does not measure land, assess its value in size or productive capacity, or conceive of this value as a figure to be permanently maintained at a given figure by the expenditure of effort and capital. He views the country round him as all one unit, all accessible to him, and all ready to supply his needs—trees to be used for wood, ash for his gardens, building material or medicines, and wild plants, game and fish for food. Whether or not he succeeds in wresting a living from the *mpanga* depends on his constant and intent observation of his surroundings, his traditional knowledge, and, the next important factor to be considered, the help of supernatural powers.

*Land and Supernatural Blessings.*

The Bemba believe that the *mpanga* is under the influence of supernatural beings, the spirits (*imipashi*) of dead chiefs who reigned over the country, or of the ancestors of the headmen in charge of individual villages. They conceive of the bush as a whole, yielding or withholding its produce according to the good or ill will of supernatural powers. The garden of an individual Bemba may fail owing to his own folly, or the hostile magic used against him, but it is a calamity more to be feared that the *mpanga* itself may refuse its spoils. It is obvious that where a people's livelihood depends to any extent on uncultivated plants, fish, or game, the element of uncertainty must actually be pronounced, and the Bemba believe that this 'luck of the bush' is in the hands of ancestral spirits to grant or withhold at will. When a native uses the word *ukushyuka*, 'to be lucky', or its opposite *ukushyama*, he may do so casually in general conversation, just as we sometimes speak laughingly of fortune having been for us or against us on any special occasion. More often, however, he uses the words in a more serious sense, which may cause him to lower his tone or look around to see if he is being overheard. Spoken in this manner, *ukushyama*, 'to be unlucky', means to be an individual who has, either by breaking a tribal code, or failing in some cere-

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monial observance, or in carrying out his obligations to his chief, roused the anger of the *imipashi* on whose beneficence he depends. In the same way the Paramount chief who is remiss in his duty, whether ritual or otherwise, risks the displeasure of the tutelary spirits of the whole land, and may plunge the entire tribe into a state of imminent ill luck. The results of such a withdrawal of supernatural blessings cannot be clearly prophesied, but they are expected to include deaths in the royal clan, general epidemics, or locust swarms, failure of the women to bear children, the sudden appearance of man-eating lions, drought, and blighted harvests, as well as the failure of the whole *mpanga* to yield its food-supplies. At such times, the natives say, men go out to hunt, but the game stays hidden in the bush; they set fish-traps and catch nothing; they look for mushrooms and find none.

For this reason a chief, when he prays to the spirits, asks for every type of blessing on the land and not for the success of cultivated crops alone. For instance, Mulewa Cimfwembe, one of the hereditary councillors of Citimukulu, described to me an occasion in the past when the Paramount had prayed for rain, saying, 'You, the owner of my land, look now! We have not yet seen any porridge, fish, meat, and all sorts of food,'[1] i.e. the withholding of rain was a symptom of a displeasure that might be expected to result also in a shortage of fish and game as well as the millet harvest. Rain fell as the result of this prayer and then, the narrator continued, 'We saw food in great plenty, and meat, and fish, every sort of food! Every one walked in peace. The lions did not spring on the people, no! And they (i.e. the people) killed many elephants.'[2]

The *imipashi*, that is to say when they had relented sufficiently to send rain, also withheld the ferocity of the lions, and stilled the quarrels of human beings. Their blessings are conceived as being given on a sort of 'all or none' principle in fact. Such beliefs hardly seem to have been shaken by white contact. Most Bemba explained the recent locust scourge as a sign of the spirits' displeasure, and even sophisticated natives pointed out that the coming of the pest had coincided with an unusual shortage of game and the fall in the price of copper that was producing unemployment at the mines.

[1] *Mwe mwine mpanga yandi, moneni! Tatumona bwali, sabi, nama, fyakulya fyonse . . .* &c.

[2] *Twamone fyakulya fingi sana, ne nama, ne sabi, fyakulya fyonse! Bonse balcendo mutende. Nkalamo Tashikata bantu, yo! Ne nsofu shingi balepaya.*

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It is difficult to discuss a primitive people's sense of the supernatural without drawing on metaphors familiar to our own religion or introducing a type of mysticism which may be quite alien to the culture concerned. We can only let the Bemba speak in his own words, and the traditional phrases in which he describes the luck or ill luck on his land do, I think, reflect this very deep belief that the fertility of the forest as a whole depends on supernatural forces who can will that it should release its treasures, or else deny them completely to mankind. When describing the misfortunes of the territory at any time in the past or the present, a Bemba uses such phrases as *calo nacikama*, 'The land is dried up', or *calo nacikosa*, 'The land has become hard, or difficult to deal with', or *cintu cakana mu calo*. 'Something has refused in this land'. When the late chief Nkula sent a message to the Citimukulu, asking him to offer prayers to his dead ancestors to avert the locust swarms, which were then causing widespread havoc, his emissary used the words *cintu cabushye mpanga*, 'Something has caused penury all over the land', and later, in the same speech, *cintu cawishye mpanga*, 'Something has overthrown (causative form of *ku-wa*, to fall) the bush'.[1] The word used to describe the misfortunes which are expected to follow the death of a big chief, is *calo cawa*, 'The land has fallen down'. When a traveller falls ill on visiting the *calo* of another chief for the first time, Bemba say, half laughingly, that he is paying tribute to the dead chiefs of the district, *ukutule mipashi*. I myself was struck with a branch of the protecting *Mwenge* tree when entering the country of Shimwalule, the hereditary burier of the chief, for the first time, to prevent me succumbing to this illness.

When fortune is good, and the country is in a condition to yield its prosperity, other metaphors are used. The land is said *ukusumina*, 'to consent or agree', or *ukubuta*, 'to be light or white', a verbal image depending on the natives' association of good fortune with bright shining things, objects coloured white like beads, white clay, and white animals and birds like the egret, which are always considered particularly beautiful and lucky. *Ukubuta*, when used of the forest, means to be clear and open, e.g. of a part of the bush cleared of brambles where it is easy to walk. This idea is often expressed in prayers used by hunters going out to set up their nets for a drive. 'Now lead on ahead of us!' said a headman of

[1] Heard at Citimukulu's village, 5.i.34.

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Kasakatula village before a drive. 'You child (i.e. member of our family) pierce the way through.'[1] At Kasaka village the headman who struck the nets for a blessing said, after calling the spirits by name, 'Light up the bush in front of us with a torch! Make it completely light. Let us kill meat.'[2] Such a series of quotations give some indication of the kind of attitude I have been trying to describe.

*Locality and Residence.*

Peoples who practise shifting cultivation are generally assumed to have no particular attachment to one stretch of land rather than another. We have already described the periodic movements of the Bemba village in relation to their agricultural system, and the individual's fairly frequent changes from community to community associated with his kinship principles and rules of residence at marriage. In such circumstances it would be surprising to find among these Central African people the same passionate devotion to a village site, or set of fields or gardens, which is reported from some of the over-populated Melanesian islands or those West African villages where fixed cultivation is practised. The permanent associations of the Bemba are a series of human relationships within his lineage group, and a reliance on certain tutelary deities associated with the soil, rather than attachments to a strip of land itself. It is not true, however, that the Bemba are without a sentimental fondness for different parts of their country. The majority of village communities tend only to move from site to site within quite a small radius—about five miles square—and are more closely connected with other communities in the same chief's territory than anywhere else. Also the people seem to cherish the warmest feelings for the deserted sites of the villages they have left (*icibolya*, plur. *ifibolya*) and even for those of other people. For the first few years after building a new settlement, villagers constantly go back to their derelict gardens to gather self-sown cucumbers and marrows, or to pick bananas on their old village sites. This connexion with the old site may last for some three or four years. But when the *icibolya* is overgrown with weeds, and small shrubs have sprung up on it, it is still spoken

[1] *Nomba tangileni pantanshi. We mwana, tungulule!*
[2] *Muno mpanga musanike umwenge! Mubute tutu! Tuipaye nama!*

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The illness of the chief is liable to bring misfortune, or rather to be associated with a general condition of ill luck, and is even now a source of fear, as I observed myself on several occasions. At his death the prosperity of the land is brought to an end just as the political organization is temporarily at a standstill. No crops are planted by the chief's family and no first-fruit rites are done. *Icalo cawa.* (The land has fallen down, i.e. the state has collapsed.) The sex life of the chief has also a mysterious effect on the welfare of all his people. His sexual power gives vigour and 'warmth' to the land. Hence the phrase *ukukafye calo* (to warm the land), and the rule that a territorial chief should never sleep with a woman when travelling outside his territory.[1] By a sexual act the *mfumu* can bless seeds or other objects required for the use of the tribe. But this power is alike the cause of danger. By breaking a sex taboo—such as approaching the spirits without the right ceremony of purification, the ruler can bring incalculable harm on the community. Of such a man I heard the comment, 'Why does he like women? Does not that imperil the land? That is not a chief. No!'[2]

Besides this powerful and mysterious influence over the land and its people, the chief is also able to influence their destinies by his power of access to the tribal spirits. This right is based on his possession of the *benye* or sacred relics by which the most powerful ancestral spirits of the Bemba can be invoked, and also by his supreme control over the spirit-centres of his whole *icalo.* The economic rites he performs at these different shrines will be described in detail later. Suffice it now to say that this supreme control over the supernatural resources of the *icalo* gives the territorial chief what Edwin Smith has called the 'spiritual ownership'[3]

*mwana Cingi. Nomba teti tukane yo. E batupela fyuma fingi, ne ndalama, ne nsalu shingi. Mwe Kampampa Mutanshi imyala yobe! Ni mwe mukalamba, mwapelo Pokili ukuti ekale pa musumba. Nomba lubuke lubemba. Ifwe twalaya mu fyalo. Shyalempo!*

[1] The Paramount in any case should not leave his district.

[2] *Cinshi baletemwa ku banakashi. Te kucile calo? Te mfumu iyi! Yo!*

[3] Cf. E. W. Smith and A. Dale, op. cit., vol. i, p. 388. It is important to realize that in many parts of Africa the spiritual owner of the land is not identical with the political owner. A warrior people extends its boundaries and occupies land under the guardianship of the tutelary spirits of other tribes. In this area it is common to find that in territory seized by the Bemba from the neighbouring Bisa or Lala during the last century, the conquering people are offering prayers to the dead chiefs of the conquered, and are dependent for this purpose on the services of a Bisa or Lala priest. The chief Nkula sends cloth to Mungulube, the

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622 651 643 grounds; one fishing village had sent three carrying baskets of fish, one voluntarily and two sent for; five had sent two gourds of beer each voluntarily; two had sent one gourd of beer and one carrying basket of millet; and two were waiting to send gifts until the chief asked for them. These figures show that the due is not fixed at the present time, but that an offering of some kind or other is usually made during the year. It is important to note that the contribution is made from the village as a whole. It is as a member of a village that a man gets permission to cultivate land, and it is the community as a whole under the leadership of the appointed headman which makes the offering. To collect it the headman puts an empty basket outside his hut and calls on each housewife to make her contribution. The levy on each person would thus be little more than 2 or 3 lb. per head, or about 3*d.* worth at current rates.

The tribute of game and fish comes under a different heading. In all Bantu societies so far described the chief gets a portion of an animal killed, or found dead in the bush, with special rights to some animals such as the elephant or hippo, and to leopard skins. To the Bemba the finding of game in the bush is essentially a matter of luck—the good fortune which only the *imipashi* can bring if approached by the ruling chiefs in the right way. Hence it used to be considered particularly important to carry a portion of the meat as a present to the capital as well as to the headman's hut.[1] In the old days, the meat of all big animals such as elephants or hippopotami belonged to the chief, and such game was in fact hunted only at his orders. A part of any buck killed in nets or pits would also be carried to the capital. The chief's portion does not seem to have been specified very clearly, and was variously described to me as either a front leg and breast or a hind leg. Nowadays game is scarce, and the powers of the chief greatly diminished, but it is still true that the inhabitants of a capital probably bring the whole of the buck to the chief for distribution; those in the neighbourhood bring a portion of the animal, while in distant villages tribute is brought in the case of unusual good luck or an unexpected find of a dead animal in the bush—treasure trove to which a chief has particular rights.

In the case of fish, the supply is too irregular to make possible an annual tribute, except from villages lying in the big rivers, such

[1] Though the chief must have been powerful to enforce these rights and people admit that game was sometimes 'hidden in the bush' (*ukufisa mu mpanga*).

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226 423 [501] fishing also, technically speaking, any man can set a net in the smaller rivers, but *de facto* few except the residents are able to do so for want of nets and canoes. Boats are individually owned, and though they may be borrowed, a man who takes a boat and catches fish in it or even kills meat on the opposite side of the river must share his luck with the owner.[1] It is rare to find more than one canoe in a village on a small stream. At the village of the Paramount, where there is much traffic over the Kalungu river, there are only two boats available for crossing and fishing. For this reason the inhabitants of fishing villages in practice have the monopoly of net setting.

226 463 [777] In the specialized fishing villages the situation is changed. Magico-religious ritual becomes more complex and is closely associated with rights of use of the river.[2] When I spent some time on the banks of the Chambesi in the territory of Mwaba and Nkula, and even on the Kalungu near the Paramount's village, I constantly heard men being picked out as being lucky fishers, and the phrase 'an expert on boats' (*aleshibishyo bwato*) means not only a man who knows how to handle canoes, but who is reputed to have powerful fishing magic. Here also definite rites of prayer [791] to the Land Spirits must be performed at the opening of the trapping and the netting seasons, and these are in the hands of economic specialists with magic powers (*icibinda*, plur. *ifibinda*) who are at one and the same time the most knowledgeable fishers, the leaders in co-operative enterprise, and the priests of the local [793] deities.[3] This office is strictly hereditary in the line of the man first given the title by the original chief. I never saw any of the fishing rites of the Chambesi, but often heard them described as big gatherings of all the neighbouring villagers who assembled

[1] Large trees fit for boat-making are rare and must sometimes be fetched from a distance, usually after paying tribute to the chief of the district, nowadays 5*s*. per tree. To hollow out a canoe with an axe-head takes a man about two months, or a team of seven or eight men three weeks. The shaping of the prow head, which is merely pointed and not carved or ornamented in any way is the task of specialists who are paid about 3*s*., so that the whole process is an expensive one. It is characteristic of the present Bemba economic system that such boats have to be sold for about £1. 10*s*. in spite of the labour taken to make them. Why? 'Because a man in this country would not find more than £1. 10*s*.'

[2] Even the launching of canoes which is done in the smaller rivers without ceremony has its own special ritual on the Chambesi River (*ukusapiko bwato*).

[3] Specialist elephant hunters with magic powers are also known as *ifibinda*. The priests of local land deities are known as *shimiapepo*. The headmen of the fishing villages combine both functions.

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magicians already described. Both are known as *ifibinda*. But naturally these specialist hunters are not common nowadays, since game restrictions prevent the killing of elephants—formerly their chief pursuit.

Every form of hunting has magic rites connected with it. Each hunter or setter of traps has his own charms (*ubwanga*) designed to make himself invisible, to draw the game to him, to slow its power of movement, &c. The animals themselves are thought to have magic attributes. Parts of their skin or bones are used as activating principles (*ifishimba*) in many charms or medicines, and many of them can only be hunted or killed after special ritual precautions have been taken to protect the hunter. All animals that attack or kill mankind are grouped in a special class known as *ifiswanga* (sing. *iciswanga*). These include the lion, leopard, cheetah, crocodile, hyena, or poisonous snakes, &c., and all these species are considered to have magic properties and to require ritual handling. Other animals are described as being *ifibanda* (sing. *icibanda*) or haunting spirits, or else are thought to turn into *ifibanda* when killed, and they are feared on that account. The bush-pig, bush-buck, hippo, rhino, eland and ant-bear are all *ifibanda*. Akin are the unlucky animals, e.g. those with the bottom teeth projecting or appearing first (*icinkula*, plur. *ifinkula*)[1] such as the zebra, the eland, haartebeest, or buffalo, which have no upper teeth in the middle of the jaw; the night owl (*ntiti mushi*) or the wild cat. None of these animals may be taken as tribute to a chief or eaten by a pregnant woman.

After killing one of the *ifiswanga* or *ifibanda*, the hunter must purify himself for fear the spirit of the animal will pursue him in dreams, bring him ill luck, or send him mad. This is also true of the elephant. The purification of a lion killer takes place at the chief's court and hereditary officials, the *Bamushika* (Kasenge and Cikutwe at Citimukulu's court), alone have the medicine required to wash the hunter.[2] But less elaborate rites are performed in the case of the leopard, crocodile, the caracal, and a bull eland with thick black tufts on its head. The ceremonies necessary after the killing of an elephant are described below.

[1] Children whose bottom teeth come through first are considered unlucky and are put to death.

[2] The *malaila* or war-song is also sung. I am indebted to Mr. T. Fox-Pitt and Mr. V. Brelsford for much confirmatory information on the magic properties of different animals.

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224 Success in this form of hunting, as in other economic activities, depends on the ancestral spirits in charge of each strip of bush. [777 These can give good or bad luck at will, and if invoked in the correct way will give an answer to their descendants' questions 774] from the bush. The *imipashi* must be called overnight in the headman's hut and before the hunt begins. The people heap up the nets together and a child—usually one of the headman's grandchildren—strikes them with a twig of the magic trees *umufungo* and *umusangati* known as Kampinda's trees. The headman then calls upon Kampinda and his wife, next upon the dead chief of the district, and sometimes also on his own ancestors. I have a number of texts of this sort. For instance, before an ordinary hunt at Kasakatula village, the headman called, 'Kampinda, guardian of the bush, lead on in front of us with your wife NaMukonda. You pierce the undergrowth ahead of us, all you chiefs and you ancestral spirits. Go on light and bright ahead of us and let all evil branches lie down flat in front of us.' And at the same village when the people were carrying out a ritual hunt the nets were struck by the father of the dead child, who cried, 'We are looking for that which troubles us. If that which troubles us has come from your father, let it be a male animal killed. If it has come from your mother, let it be a female. Go on ahead of us.' There is no hunt of either sort in which the spirits are not addressed in some way or another before the nets are set up. Net-hunting is the commonest form of hunting among the Bemba and the least skilled. It has greater ritual importance than any other and on the whole produces more game (cf. figures given on p. 39).

(*b*) *Traps and pits.* Certain types of game and birds are caught in traps and snares. Any one can set such traps and the game killed becomes the owner's property. Trapping is not in any sense an organized or a specialized activity. A variety of such snares exists, but they are mostly found only in good game country, and even then they are only set from time to time. The most common is probably the *icitembo*, a running noose fixed over a small hollow in the ground and attached to a pliable sapling bent nearly at right angles by a rope caught round a notched stick in the ground and fixed by a transverse twig to form a delicate trigger, so that a buck, stepping in the hollow, releases the bent sapling, which immediately springs back to the upright position, pulling the noose tight about its leg. This snare is used for big game like roan antelope, and set

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any regular system of time intervals. The *umwaka* (plur. *imyaka*) is the name given to the complete cycle of climatic changes and economic processes which make up the year.[1] This is divided into thirteen months (*umueshi—imieshi*) which signifies moon, or the cycle of the moon (cf. table on p. 389). The names of these months are used with greater or less frequency according to the importance of the activities performed in them. The coming of each new moon is an important event in the people's life, since it affects very largely the tempo of ordinary activities. When the moon is full, laughter and talk go on late into the night and the drums sound for dancing. When the moon has waned, there is no other system of lighting and the people go early to bed. The days of full moon are also believed to be specially lucky and to be auspicious for the starting of any new activity. I noticed several times that the *bakabilo* of Citimukulu's court postponed important ritual acts, often at some practical inconvenience, until the nights were 'white, completely white' (*ukubuta tutu*), explaining in answer to my comment: 'We cannot work at such things in the dark' (*Teti tubombefyo mu mfifi*). The rhythm of the changing moons has thus a significance to the Bemba that it has lost in our society, and the appearance of the new crescent is greeted with delight and often with shouts from the children, but at the same time the calendar of months is rarely used as a method of calculating time or fixing the start of economic activities. Some months coincide with the change of season: *Shinde* (April), the change to the cold weather; *Lusuba lunono* (October), the beginning of the hot season; *Mpundu* (November), the coming of the rains and the time of the ripening of the *mpundu* fruit. In these cases the name of the month is used in daily conversation in planning activities. But in other cases the change of climate, i.e. windy season (*mpepo*) or the hot season (*ulusuba*) is referred to only, and there are several months in the year when, owing to the difficulties of working with a thirteen-months calendar, the ordinary native is not quite certain what the name of the particular moon should be.[2] The English child hardly notices changes in the moon, but learns to recite the months of the year

[1] The *umwaka* is a cycle of seasonal changes but it is never calculated by means of the stars, in which the Bemba seem to have little interest and never use as a means of reckoning time.

[2] In April 1934 I heard the chief's council discuss informally with the Paramount chief whether the moon that had just appeared was correctly *Kutumpu* or *Shinde*, and these learned men of the tribe took different sides on the question.

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A murderer or a lion-killer can also harm a fire by being 'hot'. 783
They have done something fierce and must not eat cooked food 784
without purification. The clue to the solution of a murder case trial during my stay in the country was discovered by a Bemba detective who overheard the statement that on such and such a night, *X* and *Y* did not eat with the other men. 'They were eating their food cold'. In other words they had not yet been purified, and could not come near the common fire and hence could be presumed to be murderers.

It is difficult to exaggerate the strength of these beliefs, or the 372
extent to which they affect daily life. In a village at cooking-time 783
young children are sent here and there to fetch 'new fire' from neighbours who are ritually pure. Women in their periods call their sisters to cook for them. Young married women are seen sitting outside beer parties, and explain 'I have a young baby'. All the medicines have been taken and the protective rites done, but there is always the possibility that an adulterer might touch the fire when he is drunk and the beer might be polluted thereby.

There are other sources of danger. The first intercourse with a 833
girl after her initiation ceremony has been performed is considered 622
to be a perilous act. It is carried out with special ritual precautions and in the case of a chief, it must be undertaken by a special court official, (*kaulu*), who takes the risk on himself. This man must 'eat the chisungu' of the girl before she is taken to the chief. Yet, in spite of this danger, it is this act above all others which initiates the ritual relationship between husband and wife and it is valued on this account, so that a young man can claim damages if his [836]
betrothed has been seduced after her initiation ceremony, but before the marriage, for it is said that the chisungu of the girl has been stolen from him in this case.

One of the most fatal acts of all was for a girl to bear a child 848
before she had been initiated or before one of the more abbrevi- 777
ated rites now performed at puberty was carried out. Her child would then be a creature of ill-omen—*wa mputula*—who would bring misfortune on any village in which it lived. The child would be a portent of evil. It would stop rain falling. It would make the granaries empty quickly. It might bring dissension. The father and mother of such a child should therefore be driven out

3: Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1956
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848 777 into the bush with their baby to save the community from danger.

783 372 753 The penalties which fall on those who come in contact with polluted fire are always envisaged as illnesses, mainly of the chest (*cifuba*) and such complaints are very common in Lubemba as we saw. It is important to notice too that the punishment falls on the innocent and not the guilty. The adulterous woman who touches her hearth-stone causes her husband to fall ill 'of the chest' if he accidentally comes near the fire. The father who is 'impure' through illicit intercourse 'kills his child with fire' (*ukumuipaya umulilo*) so that the baby starts to waste away and then to die.

581 768 783 The reader will have gathered that strong mystic links are thought to exist between husband and wife. Though marriage appears unstable in Lubemba compared with the unions contracted by some of the patrilineal Bantu in South Africa, yet the destinies of husband and wife are mysteriously joined. If one partner dies, the other must sleep with some social equivalent of the dead—a brother or uterine nephew or a maternal grandson in the case of a dead man, or a sister or granddaughter in the case of a dead woman. This is to 'take the death off' the living partner. A member of the dead man or woman's matrilineage has to fetch back his or her spirit from the living spouse and makes him or her free to remarry.

833 826 837 But this is only one example of the belief that the guardian spirit (*mupashi*) and the blood of man and woman mix in sex relationships. Women of loose morals in Northern Rhodesian towns are said to bear few children because they 'mix the blood' of Bemba and men of other tribes. Again, a man who sleeps with two women unites the three in a relationship that is magically perilous. The blood is mixed (*mulopa uasakanya*). If woman *A* commits adultery with *B* and the legitimate wife of *B* sees the blood of *A* from a scratch, a tattooed mark or during menstruation, then she, the guiltless partner, will die at once unless saved by the right medicine. So also if *X*, a man, sleeps with the wife of *Y*, and *Y* sees the blood of *X* by misadventure, then *Y*, the guiltless partner, will die.

833 837 691 For mother and daughter to sleep with the same man, albeit unknowingly, is a terrible thing. For an adulterer to pass the dead body of his mistress's husband, or any other man who has slept